

Dangerous Mistakes a Christian Makes, Part 3 - Acts 25:13-15 - April 18th, 2010

- This is part three of a study titled "Dangerous Mistakes a Christian Makes," not that Paul makes any mistakes but because he does not.
- It's for this reason that we can learn invaluable life lessons from the Apostle Paul as we see how he both does and does not respond.
- This study is different in that Paul, by the Holy Spirit, rises from scripture teaching us what to say or do, and also, what not to say or do.
- We see this with the first one we looked at, where Paul avoids making a dangerous mistake that could have ultimately cost him his life.

1. We try to win favor in the eyes of the world (Verse 9)

- Festus, who was motivated by wanting to win favor with the Jews, asks Paul if he's willing to go back to Jerusalem and stand trial.
- By all accounts, this could have appealed to Paul, given that his heart has always been to win his Jewish brethren to Jesus Christ.
- Paul could've easily made the mistake of agreeing to go back to Jerusalem thinking that it would give him another chance to win them.
- Here's what I'm thinking; we too can fall prey to the notion that if we find favor in the eyes of the world, we'll be able to win the world.

2. We become easily intimidated by the world (Verse 10)

- Paul responds to Festus by telling him that he stands before Caesar's court and that's where he should ultimately be tried.
- He goes on to boldly state that he has not done any wrong to the Jews in Jerusalem, and he knows that Festus knows this very well.
- Suffice it to say, Paul is demonstrating that he's not the least bit intimidated by this politician, nor the court before which he now stands.
- Paul was neither manipulated nor intimidated by Festus or Caesar's court, because he stood before the Highest of courts to be judged.

3. We are unwilling to lose our lives in this world (Verse 11a)

- Here, Paul says something astonishing to Festus when he tells him that if he's guilty of anything deserving death, he won't refuse to die.
- The Apostle could both say this and mean this because he had long ago "settled the matter" of "dying to self" and his life in this world.

4. We refuse to take risks to win the world (Verses 11b-12)

- Paul takes a risk and makes an appeal to Caesar. This is the Caesar Nero who eventually becomes the most evil Roman emperor.
- What makes this so remarkable is that in Acts 26:32 Agrippa tells Festus that Paul could have been released had he not appealed.
- Be that as it may Paul is not making a mistake by taking the risk and appealing to Caesar because of what's recorded in Acts 23:11.

Acts 23:11 The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome." NIV

5. We don't trust God's goodness despite evil in the world (Verses 13-15)

13 A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. 14 Since they were spending many days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. He said: "There is a man here whom Felix left as a prisoner. 15 When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned.

- v13 A few days later, King Agrippa and Bernice, who is not his wife, but actually his half sister arrive in Caesarea to meet with Festus.
- v14 We're told that because they were there for several days, Festus takes the opportunity to discuss Paul's case with King Agrippa.
- v15 Festus tells him that while on his recent trip to Jerusalem, the Jews who had brought charges against Paul asked to condemn him.

- Here's the question; "why is Luke inspired by the Holy Spirit to record the details of this discussion between Festus and King Agrippa?"
- The answer to this question is also the lesson from this portion of scripture; "no matter how bad it is, it can't change how good God is."
- In other words; "it doesn't matter how bad your situation is or how bad the people around you are, it only matters how good God is."
- To say that this King Agrippa who has arrived on the scene and the situation that Paul remains in is bad would be an understatement.

- Here's why; this King Agrippa is Agrippa the 2nd, who is the son of Agrippa the 1st, which makes him the great-grandson of Herod.
- Herod is the one who gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem two years old and under, to eliminate Jesus after He was born.
- In addition to this, this King Agrippa had a great-uncle who just so happened to be the one who had John the Baptist beheaded.
- His dad King Agrippa the 1st had James executed and tried to execute Peter as well, had he not miraculously been freed from prison.
- Also, he's in an incestuous relationship with his half sister Bernice who eventually leaves him for Titus who later destroys Jerusalem.

- About now you might be saying to yourself; "why do I need to know this history lesson and how could this possibly apply to me?"
- We're prone to make the mistake of seeing our God through our circumstances instead of seeing our circumstances through our God.
- The danger is that we can lose hope that God will somehow bring good out of my bad situation regardless of whom or what is involved.
- Perhaps you have a Festus, a King Agrippa and a Bernice in your life right now, and you're wondering how God will work it for good.
- I want to encourage you with this; "I don't know "how" God will do it, or "when" God will do it, but I do know "that" God will do it!"

- I think of Joseph, and how bad it looked to him. Surely evil has prevailed, and there is no way that any good will come from such evil.

Genesis 50:20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. NKJV

- I think of David who for different reasons knew it looked bad for him. Yet in the end he was the recipient of the goodness of the Lord.

Psalms 27:13-14 13 I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. 14 Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD! NKJV

- The common denominator between Paul, Joseph, David and many others like them, is that they had a prior promise from the Lord.